(warmth in) quiet winter

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/25968835.

Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
No Archive Warnings Apply

Category:
Gen

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Midoriya Izuku & Sero Hanta

Character:
Midoriya Izuku, Sero Hanta, Asui Tsuyu, Ashido Mina

Additional Tags:
In which trauma and cold don't mix particularly well, Angst with a Happy Ending, I was over here crying over "just keep trucking" and now you can too, ALSO crying about Izuku and Mina doing homework, like. these are literal children. please let them rest.

Language:
English

Series:
Part 9 of DancingInTheStorm's BNHA fics

Collections:
Class 1-A Training Goes Wrong, favs favs favs, bnha fics i dream about 🌙, Fucking GEMMMSSSS

Stats:
Published: 2020-08-18 Words: 5,175 Chapters: 1/1

(warmth in) quiet winter

by DancingInTheStorm

Summary

"If I'm doing my math right, they should be sending people to look for us soon," Izuku said, dragging his dripping mittens off and rubbing his hands to warm them. "If we can wait until then, we'll be okay."

There followed a silence in which they all acknowledged the potential for the fight to have gone very, very wrong. Maybe no one was coming. Maybe villains were coming.

OR

Mountain training goes badly wrong when Izuku and Sero get lost in the cold.

Notes

Trigger warning for kind-of-near drowning

See the end of the work for more notes

Aizawa was either a seer or utterly resigned to his fate, Izuku thought, because the first thing he had done when they arrived was start a buddy system with 1A on the grounds that “something will go wrong, so just brace for it.”

“Honestly,” Sero panted to Izuku, struggling his way through the snow, “I kind of expected things to go wrong sooner with you, Midoriya.”

Izuku spared a precious few seconds to be mortified that he had dragged Sero into his legendary bad luck. “Sorry,” he mumbled, glancing behind his shoulder. No pursuit. “I think we lost them.”

Sero checked behind him. “Yeah.” He paused. “This. Is. Stupid,” he bit out, releasing an explosive breath. “ *All* we were doing was practicing snow rescues. Did this really warrant a villain attack?”

Izuku didn’t really know how to respond to that.

“It’s crazy, is what it is,” Sero said, working up steam. “Do villains have nothing better to do with their time than—“

“Look,” Izuku said, pointing one mittened hand at the sky. Above them, clouds edged in, promising the sort of cold that bit right through your bones. “We’d better get moving.”

“Yeah,” Sero said, the faintest tremble to his voice. “Where are we, anyways?”

Izuku's heart sank. Sure, the villains had zigzagged them all across the mountains, but he had been really hoping Sero had kept some sense of direction.

(He kicked himself for not paying attention to where they were running. He had been too busy analyzing the attacker’s Quirks and worrying about his classmates. Aizawa would have his head for lack of situational awareness.)

“Um, the sun’s that way?” Izuku said, waving his hands. “And we were facing the sunrise on the bus into town, and it’s still rising unless we were chased so long it’s afternoon, now, but I don’t think we were, so—“ he pointed “—I think the town is that direction.”

“You think?” Sero said, sharp voice such a cutting contrast to his normal, easygoing nature. “You’re staking our lives on a *guess* ?”

“I—I think it’s right—“ Izuku said, flinching back. “I guess I don’t know for sure, but—“ He trailed off for a second. “But I don’t think we’ll die out here,” he finished weakly. “Probably.”

Sero dragged a gloved hand over his face. “I’m sorry,” he said, voice muffled. “That wasn’t—I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have taken things out on you.”

“What things?” Izuku asked, cautious.

Sero’s face flickered. “Let’s start walking while I tell you. This way, right?”

“Um, yeah,” Izuku said, hurrying to keep up. It was slow going; the snow was halfway up to his knees, and he had to step ridiculously high to achieve any sort of speed. Sero strode on ahead, similarly slow but with the advantage of longer legs.

“My aunt died,” Sero said. “Skiing, I mean. She got stranded, and no one found her until it was too late.”

“Oh,” Izuku said, swallowing hard. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine,” Sero said, probably by reflex, and immediately contradicted himself by saying “I spent a lot of time researching, after that. It’s—we’ve got to stay warm, and get inside before it gets dark, or—“ Sero exhaled, slow and careful.

“We’ll make it,” Izuku said, words coming easier now that he knew the problem. “They can send, like, helicopters to find us, right?”

“Right,” Sero echoed, sounding like he was trying to force the words into his brain off willpower alone. “Right, right. No gruesome snow deaths for us.” He cracked a smile, but it didn’t reach his eyes.

They walked in silence for a while. Izuku tried to calculate how long it would take to send helicopters, after accounting for how long it would take Aizawa to finish fighting the main villains after he told them all to run—

“Stop that,” Sero snapped.

“Sorry.”

“It—it’s fine. You just went over your calculations twice by now, and both times, the helicopters should have arrived already and—yeah.”

Actually, Izuku figured they had another half hour at least before helicopters arrived, but he got it. He did. Sero was panicking enough that time was going weird for him.

“Wish we had Bakugo,” Sero mumbled. “He’d—I don’t know, curse till someone came to shut him up, or something.”

Yeah, that sounded like Kacchan. Izuku wished Kacchan was here, too, to comfort Sero. Izuku himself was too shy and stressed to be much help. But thinking about rescue plans was off the table—the mumbling set Sero’s nerves on edge.

“I could, um,” Izuku ventured. “Talk about the latest All Might merchandise?” He held his breath, hoping. Sero was a fan of action figures, so maybe—

“Okay,” Sero said. The set of his shoulders was barely visible under the bulky coat, but Izuku thought they relaxed just slightly. “All Might merchandise. Okay.”

Izuku was used to his fanboying being annoying, so he started slow and cautious with a breakdown of the best suppliers. Sero didn’t say anything, but his steps were less forceful, his face a little less bleak, so Izuku moved on to international merchandise laws, and why it was so difficult to get American products shipped over to Japan.

He was fully in gear by then, lost in a world of licensing and nostalgia, so he didn’t immediately notice Sero grinding to a stop beside him.

“Midoriya,” Sero said, throwing out an arm to stop Izuku’s thoughtless trek forward. “Look.”

Izuku jerked back into reality, noticing with a swoop in his stomach that it had got considerably colder since he had last paid attention. His face ached with cold, and his lungs were sharp with the pain of breathing in icy air for too long.

They were cresting the top of a hill. Below them, a river with people clustered on the other side.

As one, Sero and Izuku ducked for cover. Snow crunched around him as Izuku nestled close to the ground. “Did they look like villains?” Izuku breathed.

“Couldn’t tell,” Sero breathed back, face tight with anxiety. “Do we face them if they are?”

“Aizawa said to run,” Izuku bit out. He hadn’t been happy with that, but there had been more villains than at the USJ, and Izuku didn’t want to chance dragging Sero into a fatal conflict.

“Would Aizawa fight them if he were here?” Sero said. “Knowing they might have information we need to get out alive?”

“Knowing that they might kill us,” Izuku hissed, aware of the irony in him telling Sero to stay out of an unsanctioned fight given Izuku’s track record.

But Sero was rattled and scared, and there were no trees or buildings for him to swing off of. This wasn’t a safe matchup for Sero.

“I can scout it out—“ Izuku started.

There was yelling from down below, too faint to make out words.

“Does that sound like Ashido?” Sero said, cutting Izuku off.

Izuku stopped and listened, relief blooming in his stomach. “It does,” he agreed. “We should be careful, though. I’ll go—“

“You’re always so fast to sacrifice yourself, Midoriya,” Sero bit out, jerking Izuku back from his attempt to scoot forward. “Stop it.” There was real anger in his voice, enough to freeze Izuku in his tracks.

“You’re anxious,” Izuku pointed out, collapsing back to his knees. “I’m in a better headspace.”

At this, Sero actually snorted, face caught somewhere between frustration and deterAshidotion. “You’re always anxious, so—“

A high whistle cut through the tension between them.

Two weeks ago, Aizawa had sat them all down and taught them a set of codes all heroes knew. This whistle was the equivalent of “report to base.”

Sero paused, going limp in relief, before scrambling over and down the hill. “Wait,” Izuku said, trying to grab for him, but Sero was already gone. “The villains might know the code—“

Then he scrambled over the hill after Sero, because if these were villains, Sero would need backup.

But it was just Ashido and Tsuyu, waving at the two of them as they

slid down the hill.

“—told you it was someone from class,” Izuku heard as he got closer. “Hey, Sero, Midoriya, you guys okay?”

“They might have been villains,” Tsuyu croaked from beneath a mountainous pile of clothing. “We need to be careful.”

“Well, they’re not,” Ashido said, light and airy words lined with something tight. “Good thing, too.”

Izuku skidded to a stop beside the frozen river. “What’s the river ice like?” he asked.

“We came from the other side,” Tsuyu croaked. “We don’t know, kero.”

Sero was already inching onto the ice.

“What if I run across the ice?” Izuku said, shuffling across to stand behind Sero. “I can outrun any cracks, and then we’ll know if the ice is thick enough.”

“If I wait any longer, I’m going to lose my nerve,” Sero said through gritted teeth. “Just—let me—“ His words trailed off as he shuffled forward, hands visibly shaking.

“I can reach you with my tongue once you get halfway across,” Tsuyu offered. “Be careful.”

“If I run across—“ Izuku started again.

Ashido hummed. “You’re fast since you have a lot of power in your legs. What if your steps are too strong, and you smash through the ice?”

Sero edged a little further out as Izuku considered how to stay light on his feet.

There was an awful cracking sound. Sero yelled, then disappeared.

“What do we do, Deku?” Ashido yelled, words just this side of panicked. “You always have a plan!”

“Um,” Izuku said, scrabbling onto the ice. It groaned under him. On the other side of the river, Ashido and Tsuyu were doing the same.

Sero's head bobbed up, choking up water. The hole was fairly small, but when he snatched at the closest ice, it gave way under his hands. Sero was yelling, panicking, flailing.

"Sero!" Izuku called, edging forward. "Calm down. Swim toward the ice. Tsuyu, get off the ice. We can't afford to have you fall in—you'd pass out from the cold."

Sero flung his arms onto ice and finally, blessedly, it stayed sturdy under his weight. He tried to pry himself out, but failed.

"Okay," Izuku said, forcing calm into his mind at the sight of one of his classmates' lives in his hands. "That's good. Sero, stay there, we'll get you out. Can you shoot tape?" Sero was used to hauling himself around with his tape. If he could shoot tape onto sturdier ice, then drag himself out—

"No!" Sero shouted back. "The ice water makes it too brittle." Then, an edge of hysteria in his voice, he added "I can't feel my legs. Midoriya, help, *I can't feel my legs* —"

"I'm going to smash the ice in front of you," Izuku said, heart in his mouth. "Then I'll shove you forward with air pressure and Tsuyu can grab you with her tongue, okay? Just hang on a bit longer."

Sero laughed, the sound unhinged. "I face how many villains my first year of high school, and I die by drowning?"

"You'll live, kero," Tsuyu said, voice steady. "You'll live. Just wait for Midoriya to push you toward me."

Sero laughed again, wild. "I'm gonna die, and it's not even going to be a villain—"

"Sero," Tsuyu said, voice sharp with authority. "Calm down."

Izuku didn't know how steady the ice was, so he used precious time to get onto his belly to spread his weight out before slithering forward, the ice rough and cold under him. Tsuyu kept talking to Sero, the words blurring out in Izuku's focus. Vaguely, he registered Ashido backing off the ice to make way for Izuku blasting the two of them to shore.

Below him, the ice creaked. Izuku scrabbled and wormed forward until, at last, he was in position just ahead of Sero.

Raising his hand, he paused a moment before punching out with One for All. The ice gave way under him, and, soundlessly, he fell.

Water swirled around him, dizzyingly cold, and Izuku gasped for air. He was underwater only a few seconds, but in that time, all the air had left his lungs in a hurry.

Kicking to keep himself afloat, he surveyed the river. Around him, ice lay shredded in a wide path to shore, exposing the water underneath.

“Sero,” he said, once he had enough air to yell. “I’m going to blast the ice between us, then propel us to shore, okay?”

“Okay,” Sero said back, voice wavering but lucid. Thank goodness for Tsuyu. Izuku flicked his finger again, far more gently, to shred the ice between him and Sero. This was a precision shot; too much, and he’d slam Sero against the ice. Too little, and it wouldn’t clear a path to Sero.

The shot worked. Sero was drowned in a wave of ice water, but Izuku was already dragging himself forward using the ice. By the time Sero resurfaced, Izuku was almost to him.

Izuku grabbed Sero’s shaking wrist, feeling the numb of extreme cold curling into his bones, aching, greedy.

“Ready, Tsuyu?” he shouted, looping an arm around Sero’s shoulders to secure his grip.

“Yes,” Tsuyu called back.

Izuku took a deep breath—no time to lose—and swung around so his back was to Tsuyu. Then, he braced his feet against the ice and *kicked* , One for All flooding his stiff legs.

Everything went upside down and blurry for a second, Izuku gagging on water, clutching Sero tight to his side. Amid the chaos, Sero clutched back with something akin to a death grip. Water shot up Izuku’s nose from the momentum of their blastoff, but he didn’t have hands or air to clear it out.

Then something strong coiled around their waists, and Tsuyu was dragging them to shore.

Izuku coughed as Tsuyu let them go in the shallows of the river. Was Sero alright? Rubbing water out of his eyes, he glanced over at the

other boy.

Sero was sitting in the water, pale and shaking but unhurt. Izuku nodded and dedicated himself to clearing his nose of about a gallon of water. He could already tell the pressurized water would give him a nasty sinus headache.

Someone touched his shoulder. “Stop sitting in the water,” Ashido chided, the laugher in her words forced. “Come dry off.”

Ah. Right. Izuku stood and turned to Sero, who was holding a staring competition with something far, far past the mortal world.

“Sero,” he said, touching Sero’s shoulder. “Sero, get up.”

Sero didn’t move.

“Sero!” Izuku said, shaking Sero.

“It’s shock,” Tsuyu said. “Get out of the water or you’ll all freeze to death.”

Ashido wordlessly helped Izuku haul Sero out of the water and onto the bank. They dumped him in a shallow snow bank for lack of options, then held a council of war.

“If I’m doing my math right, they should be sending people to look for us soon,” Izuku said, dragging his dripping mittens off and rubbing his hands to warm them. “If we can wait until then, we’ll be okay.”

There followed a silence in which they all acknowledged the potential for the fight to have gone very, very wrong. Maybe no one was coming. Maybe villains were coming.

“I’m most worried about keeping warm,” Ashido confessed. “Midoriya and Sero are soaked, my legs are wet, and Tsuyu’s probably going to—um. We need to build a fire or something.”

“Will the smoke show the villains where we are?” Izuku asked.

At the same time, Tsuyu dug into the snow with her boot. “I just see dirt, kero. What can we use for fuel?”

Ashido deflated. “I don’t know.” She didn’t cry—they were all well past the point of crying in bad situations—but she sounded anxious. “I’m going to check on Sero.”

“We need to decide whether to hide,” Tsuyu said, echoing Izuku’s thoughts.

“We’d hide from villains, but also from rescuers,” Izuku finished. “What do you think?”

Tsuyu considered it. “We should build shelter. We can hide in it if we need, and we can use it if we have to stay for the night.”

That made sense to Izuku. “Should we try to keep going?” he said, sounding out their other options. “We might make it back to town, or find the others.”

Tsuyu put a finger to her lips, but before she could speak, Ashido interrupted. “Uh, guys? Sero’s not doing okay.”

Sero, as a matter of fact, was very not okay. He watched them all mutely, eyes blown wide, and didn’t respond no matter what anyone said.

“We might have to stay put,” Tsuyu told Izuku, rubbing circles on Sero’s back. “I don’t think he can travel.”

“You’re right,” Izuku agreed. “Let’s build a snow wall at least, so we’re sheltered if the wind picks up. We can’t afford to get cold.” Point of fact, he was already cold, standing around in sopping clothes that just magnified the chill. Maybe building a wall would warm him up.

“Right,” Tsuyu agreed.

Ashido shrugged, almost casual. “You two are the smart ones,” she said, bending down to scoop up snow. “I’ll just do what you tell me.”

“Let’s put the wall there,” Tsuyu said, pointing. “If we angle it right, it should catch most of the wind.”

There was a few minutes of slow, wet work before anyone spoke.

“What do you think everyone else is doing?” Ashido asked, stomping on the low wall to pack it down.

Fighting villains, maybe. Bleeding out. Running around trying to find each other. Izuku scrabbled for a comforting answer.

Tsuyu beat him to it. “Warming themselves up with Todoroki,” she said with feeling. “Who got paired with him?”

“Ochaco,” Izuku answered, packing on more snow. “Wait, no, Aizawa switched her with Tokoyami. Said Ochaco and Shouto enable each other.”

“They do,” Tsuyu mumbled.

Ashido groaned. “Tokoyami’s super lucky! He even has that great big cloak. Did you see how many layers he fit under it?”

“Am I dying?” Sero asked from behind, startling them all.

Izuku glanced at Tsuyu. She was the best at staying calm and soothing, right now. “No,” she said. “You’re safe. We’re just building a wall to block the wind while we figure out what to do next.”

Sero huddled deeper into himself. “We’re going to die,” he said, terror and acceptance warring in his voice.

Izuku dropped his handful of snow and hurried over to Sero. “We’re going to make it,” he said, as gentle as he was with Eri. “I promise. We’ve made it this far.”

“We’ve made it this far,” Sero echoed, faint, and something about that unlocked all the words he had trapped in his chest. “My aunt always said that she was the best skier in the prefecture. She took me skiing when I was young. I once wiped out really badly. Had a concussion and everything. She told me—“

His words caught. “She told me it’d be alright, since she’d always make sure I got out okay,” he finished, voice broken.

Izuku squeezed Sero’s hands, hoping it would be enough to ground the other boy.

“What would your aunt say to you now?” Tsuyu said mildly.

Izuku slashed his hand in front of his throat, but it was too late. Sero clutched his knees, gasping for air. “She—she’s *dead* and we’re going to *die* —“

A snowball smacked against his leg. Everyone turned to look at Ashido, who shrugged helplessly, left hand holding another snowball. “You looked like you needed to be distracted,” she said. “Do I need to throw another snowball at you?” Her tone was light, but her eyes were anxious.

“Come help us build this wall, Sero,” Tsuyu said in the no-nonsense tone that Izuku immediately identified as her big sister voice, despite having no siblings himself. “Just grab snow and pack it on.”

Sero jerked himself to his feet. “She’d say—to keep on trucking.”

Ashido cocked her head, dropping the snowball. “Huh?’

“My aunt,” Sero said, taking a deep breath. “You asked what she’d say to us. She always said to keep on trucking.”

“That’s the spirit,” Ashido encouraged. “Come help with the wall.”

“Right,” Sero said, staggering over. “Right.”

The wind did pick up; everyone huddled behind the snow wall as they built it higher and higher. Finally, Izuku could no longer reach over his head to pack snow in. He knew he was short, but still. “Is this high enough?” he asked, patting the wall.

“Yes,” Tsuyu agreed.

“What now?” Ashido asked, eyes darting between Tsuyu and Izuku. “What did you plan next?”

Tsuyu glanced at Izuku. “We might have to stay the night,” she said slowly.

Sero stiffened.

“There’s fresh water here,” Tsuyu continued, keeping a careful eye on Sero. “That might be better than we find anywhere else.”

“We can’t,” Sero said, clenching and unclenching his fists. “We’re, we’re going to die if we stay here, we have to *keep on trucking* —“

Izuku thought of the hours and hours he and Sero had run from the villains. This river was the first time they saw water. Then again, they could eat snow—“

“I’m such a burden,” Sero spat out, shaking. “You keep taking care of me and I just freak out and panic and slow everyone down—“

“It’s okay to be scared,” Tsuyu said.

“I’m a hero!” Sero barked, curling his arms around his waist. “I can’t afford to be scared.”

That startled a laugh out of Izuku. “Sero, am I a hero?”

“You—you’re all so much better than I am, I—“

“Sero,” Izuku said, taking a carefully broadcast step forward. “Am I a hero?”

Sero looked down at Izuku. “Yes,” he breathed. “Yes, you are.”

“I’m scared all the time,” Izuku said frankly. “Does that make me not a hero?”

Sero shook his head and closed his eyes, squeezing out tears that trickled down his cheeks.

“Heroes—they’re scared. A lot, I think,” Izuku said, taking a few deep breaths. “But they keep getting back up. That’s what a hero is.”

“Midoriya’s right,” Tsuyu croaked.

Sero clenched and unclenches his fists. “Heroes just keep trucking,” he whispered.

“We just keep trucking,” Tsuyu agreed. “So. How do we want to proceed?”

In the end, they decided to stay put for a few more hours. The river was a fairly big landmark, Tsuyu pointed out, and some classmates might think to follow it. Therefore, their best odds of meeting up with their classmates was to keep to the river bank.

“How about I go scouting?” Izuku offered. “I can see if there’s anything around.”

“I‘m coming,” Sero said immediately, taking a trembling step toward Izuku.

Tsuyu, Ashido, and Izuku shared a look.

“You’re pretty shaken up, kero,” Tsuyu said gently. “Stay here and rest.”

“I need to know what’s around,” Sero insisted, voice shaking badly. “I need to see.”

“I can move faster than you,” Izuku pointed out. “If you don’t come, I can scout the area out faster.”

Sero took a few deep breaths, glancing down at his unsteady hands. “I—I know I’m pretty useless in a fight right now,” he said, voice so ragged that it sounded like he was swallowing glass. “I guess I’d—get in your way?” He fiddled with his elbows. “But—“

“You’re not useless,” Izuku said firmly. “I just want to do this quick. The faster we scout the area, the faster we can figure out what our next step is.”

Sero jerked out a nod, and Izuku took off running.

There really wasn’t anything around. Izuku suspected that at the beginning, and he could confirm that with confidence twenty minutes later. The most exciting thing was a tree—good if they needed to build a flare or start a fire, assuming they could figure out how to make sparks.

He was worried. Building a flare would get them help faster, and the only thing stopping him was the threat of villains. The fact that he had seen no flare from his classmates meant they were thinking the same thing.

Where were the rescue parties? It had been hours.

Belatedly, he realized that he had spread footprints all over the area of their temporary shelter. It would be a huge red flag to anyone searching for them.

(Who—what—was searching for them?)

He returned to his classmates out of breath. He described the tree, and Tsuyu described talking Sero down from another bout of terror. He was asleep, now, curled up against the wall.

“You should sleep, too,” Izuku said.

“I’ll fall into hibernation if I lay down in the snow, kero. It’s too cold for me.”

“I know.” Izuku rubbed his hands against his legs in an attempt to get feeling back into his fingers. “Your body protects you from the cold by hibernating, which is better than us. We can warm you up if we need you, and that way we’ll have someone who’s rested.”

It was a risk. It would take time to warm Tsuyu up, meaning any surprise attack would leave her completely vulnerable.

Tsuyu assessed him a moment, then nodded. “I trust you,” she said, and laid down. Almost immediately, her breathing slowed into deep, deep sleep.

Ashido shot him a wobbly smile. “Just you and me, huh?”

Izuku painted on a smile. “Yup.” He cast around for something, anything, to distract her. She was clearly distressed, and they were all heavy with cold. Anything, at this point, would be a welcome reprieve.

“How many rocks do you think are in the bottom of the river?” he said, realizing his mistake when Ashido made a face.

“I’m not doing math while I’m freezing to death,” she said, almost loftily. “Avoiding class is one of the few perks of this all.”

That startled a laugh out of Izuku. “Maybe you should be thinking about school,” he said. “Have you even started the Shakespeare essay yet?”

Ashido made a face. “No! It’s not due for another week, yet.”

“Okay,” Izuku said. “So Romeo and Juliet is a tragedy based on two families at war, right? The assigned text compared the warring families to the hero-villain war, and said that civilian casualties were like Romeo and Juliet’s pointless deaths.”

Ashido’s eyes went wide. “Romeo and Juliet *die* in the play? But aren’t they, like, star-crossed lovers or something?”

Izuku huffed. “Star-crossed means cursed, basically.”

Ashido nodded solemnly. “Shakespeare was a messed up dude. Why did they die?”

Izuku explained.

Ashido’s face was grave, but her eyes were sparkling. “Someone needed to tell them not to give up. They needed to just keep trucking.”

“Just keep trucking,” Izuku agreed. “Hey, you could make an essay out of that if you—“

They were deep into their English homework, Izuku drawing sloppy diagrams in the snow, when Ashido screamed. “Look! Look!”

Izuku’s head shot up, looking around wildly. “Where?”

Ashido pointed, still screaming. In the distance, dark specks in the sky grew larger and larger, accompanied by a deep thrum.

“Helicopters!” Ashido yelled in his ear. “The helicopters are here!”

The shouting woke Sero, who looked around in a groggy panic. “What’s happening?” he demanded. “Villains?”

“Helicopters!” Ashido shouted. “They came for us! Get Tsu up!”

Izuku knelt at Tsuyu’s side. “Hey,” he said, shaking her hard. No response. She flopped around like a rag doll, breathing slow.

Izuku blushed as he realized the amount of body contact he would need to have with her to generate enough body heat to wake her up. “Ashido,” he said, “come help with Tsuyu.”

By the time Ashido realized what needed to be done, the helicopter had arrived. Aizawa and Tenya leapt out, hurrying over. “Is anyone hurt?” Aizawa demanded.

Izuku waited for one of his classmates to answer, but Ashido was too busy laughing while Sero was too busy staring at Iida in dumb amazement. “No one’s hurt,” he said after a beat. “Tsuyu’s hibernating, Sero’s pretty scared, and we’re all cold, but we’re okay.”

He let himself relax for the first time in hours. “We’re all okay,” he repeated, suddenly exhausted. “How’s everyone else?”

“Fine,” Aizawa said, kneeling down by Tsuyu. “Sato has a fracture in his arm, and Todoroki’s got Quirk exhaustion from providing fire, but everyone’s safe. Some of you might have colds tomorrow.”

Aizawa felt Tsuyu’s pulse before nodding and scooping her up in his arms. “Iida, help the others back to the helicopter.”

Tenya nodded. “You are the last people to be found!” he announced, pressing a hand to Izuku’s back. “You were very removed from the main group.”

Izuku remembered running for what was probably hours. “We went pretty far, didn’t we?” he breathed. “We tried walking back toward the village.

“If so,” Tenya said gravely, “you almost certainly went in the wrong direction.”

Izuku made a face.

“We are proud of you,” Tenya said, quieter. Izuku looked up at him, a little ashamed at getting so thoroughly lost, a little curious at the words.

“You didn’t stay and fight when Aizawa told us to run,” Tenya murmured. “We were all worried we’d have to carry you off in a stretcher, or—“

Izuku heard the words unspoken.

Izuku ducked his head, a little sheepish. “I couldn’t do that when Sero was so—“ He broke off, glancing over at Ashido supporting Sero’s unsteady weight. “Er, I’ll meet you back at the helicopter.”

Tenya followed his line of sight. “Allow me to assist,” he said gravely. “It is my duty as class president to support our classmates in times of distress.”

Ochaco would laugh at the over-formal words. Normally, Izuku would, too, but Sero was still pale, and Izuku was still exhausted. He contented himself with a small smile before jogging over to Ashido and Sero. “Tenya says he can take Sero,” he told Ashido.

“Don’t talk about me like I’m not here,” Sero mumbled.

Izuku didn’t have the heart to tell Sero he hadn’t been properly present since they crossed the river. “Sorry,” he said instead. “Are you okay if Tenya takes over?”

“I’m fine,” Sero insisted, staggering.

Tenya materialized at Izuku’s elbow. “Even so, it is no trouble to ask for assistance in times of trouble!” he said, arms chopping. His voice gentled at the genuine distress on Sero’s face. “I do not doubt your capabilities. However, you have been stranded in the mountains for nearly five hours. It would be my greatest pleasure to help you recover.”

Sero took in a deep breath, then let it out in a whoosh. “We made it, didn’t we?” he asked to no one in particular. “We’re safe.”

Izuku nodded, looping an arm around Ashido’s shoulders as Tenya took Sero’s weight. She leaned into Izuku’s touch, hiding her face in his shoulder for the briefest moment before straightening with a smile. “We made it!” she cheered, clapping her hands. “Let’s go get hot chocolate!”

Sero sagged into Tenya’s sturdy arms. “We trucked.”

Ashido and Izuku leaned into the weight of each other, taking a moment to relax in the more-than-physical warmth. “Yeah,” Izuku said, voice soft. “We trucked.”

End Notes

Tsuyu wakes up just fine after being plopped in warm water for a bit. After everyone gets home, 1A does drink copious amounts of hot chocolate and most everyone falls asleep in the living room. Eri and Aizawa come around with blankets.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!